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29

Participatory Review in Chronic Instability: The Experience of the Ikafe Refugee Settlement Programme, Uganda

by Koos Neefjes

Abstract

This paper presents the participatory review of the Ikafe settlement programme in northwest Uganda. Set up in 1994, the Ikafe project allocated land to Sudanese refugees so that they could become self-sufficient in food supply, attempt to reach self-management and representation, as well as some measure of integration with the host population. Those involved in the project included the Ugandan authorities, multilateral aid agencies and international NGOs.

Leaders of the host population, refugees, and agencies Oxfam, Action Africa in Need and Jesuit Refugee Service, all participated in the review. Attempts were undertaken to reach a deeper understanding of the conflicting interests, and to formulate ways forward. The review set out to use methodologies previously employed in comparatively stable situations, but was interrupted by violence. Inspite of this it continued to engage with all stakeholders, adapted to the changing context, and effectively developed ideas for participatory review in situations of instability by 'doing'.

The conclusions were unfortunately overtaken by further violence and evacuation of staff from the project site. Most refugees also moved away and the bigger settlement of the project is now closed. However, the methodology of the review has many positive lessons in terms of encouraging cooperation, increased transparency of intervening agencies and, above all, lessons for improving the plight of refugees and poor host populations.

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Uganda

SUDAN
D. R. CONGO
KENYA
TANZANIA
RWANDA
Arua
Moyo
Kitgum
Kotido
Arua
Gulu
Gulu
Nebbi
Moroto
Moroto
Apac
Lira
Masindi
Lake Kwania
Soroti
Masindi
Lake Bisina
Lake Kyoga
Lake Albert
Kumi
Kapchorwa
Luwero
Hoima & Kibale
Kamuli
Tororo & Pallisa
Bundi-begyo
Mubende & Kiboga
Jinja
Iganga
Kabarole & Kibale
Kampala
Jinja
Mukono
Kasese
Lake George
Mpigi
Entebbe
Mbarara
Masaka
Bushenyi
Masaka
Sese
Lake Edward
Mbarara
Rakai
Lake Victoria
Rukungiri
Kabale & Kisoro

1

Introduction

Helping Refugees

The plight of the south Sudanese refugees in northwest Uganda was and is precarious, in particular because they have suffered violence and poverty both sides of the border. In Sudan, a war between separatist forces in the south and the government forces which control the rest of the country has raged for many years. The host populations of Aringa and Terego counties in Arua district, northwest Uganda, have also been victims of violence over the past decades. Many were displaced to Sudan earlier, as a result of civil war, and they still suffer the consequences of political instability in Sudan and parts of their own country. But refugees and host populations are not only victims. Some play a role in the complex politics that fuel much of the violence; others are falsely accused of being involved.

Violence makes it almost impossible to achieve individual livelihood improvements and regional economic development. However, in 1994 when the violence in Uganda seemed to be decreasing (though the situation in the refugee camps near the border town of Koboko was still far from ideal, especially in terms of security and public health) international agencies and Ugandan authorities agreed to provide refugees with land so that they could provide food for themselves and become less dependent on (international) food deliveries. Oxfam was the lead agency in this large-scale project, and it set up a participatory review that ran from April to October 1996, about one-and-a-half years after the refugees started arriving.

The project, called Ikafe after the larger part of the settlement area that falls in Aringa county, was also designed to communicate with and support the local host population. Some local people actually lived in the refugee area or claimed part of the land that was set aside for the refugees. It was this that led Oxfam to realise the importance of making the review as participatory as possible.

Review Objectives

Reviews and evaluations of emergency responses are not often participatory, even if participatory is interpreted merely as 'consultative'. They are normally done quickly and are led by (external) experts in logistics, nutrition, water supply or other sectoral concerns and not by experts in facilitation, consultation and social development. This may be explained by the nature of aid efforts: short-term, logistics-oriented, dominated by external and

foreign agencies, and usually totally over-stretched. They are usually achievement or output-oriented, and sometimes involve generally agreed primary impacts like 'lives saved'.[1]

While the Ikafe project had immediate objectives relating to the settlement and survival of refugees it also had longer term, developmental aims: food and economic self-sufficiency, 'representation' of refugees, and a level of integration of refugees with the host population.[2] The review intended to assess the work and its impact, so had to relate to these objectives but also look beyond them. 'Impact' is different from 'achievements' in the sense that it assesses the more structural and fundamental changes in lives and livelihoods[3] that can be attributed to a project or set of activities. Impacts can be positive or negative, expected or unexpected, and are normally dependent on the specific context and the actors and activities involved. The Ifake review was also to be done with the project team, refugees and host population. Working 'with' implies the involvement of stakeholders in a process of learning.[4] It could not be a conventional review or evaluation 'against set objectives' because that would have been contradictory to the idea of participation of stakeholders in impact assessment.

The Ikafe project's review consisted of two main stages: April 1996 saw a three week data collection and meeting exercise; the second, shorter stage, ran from August when conclusions were discussed in a large joint meeting with most of the stakeholders. The final report was published in October 1996.

The review had four objectives as formulated by the Oxfam managers of the settlement and other Oxfam staff in Kampala and Oxford:

1. To support the project team, representative refugees and members of local communities to review the work and impact of the project over the last year and think about the future direction of the project.
2. To help the project team develop systems and community indicators for the monitoring of the impact of Oxfam's work on the communities.
3. To facilitate the development of long-term objectives and plans involving a broad range of stakeholders.
4. To recommend to Oxfam improvements on programme management.

These objectives reflected the idea of impact, participation, the developmental approach, and the long-term outlook of the project and its review.

The review process was premised on a relatively stable political situation in Uganda which was conducive to participatory research and a progressive attitude to refugees (they were given land to cultivate!). However, the political situation deteriorated and became very unstable during the review period and thereafter which meant that the review process and its recommendations had to respond to a rapidly deteriorating situation. Violence and confusion thus affected the methodology of the review, which is essentially the main topic of this paper.

2

The Ikafe Project and its Context

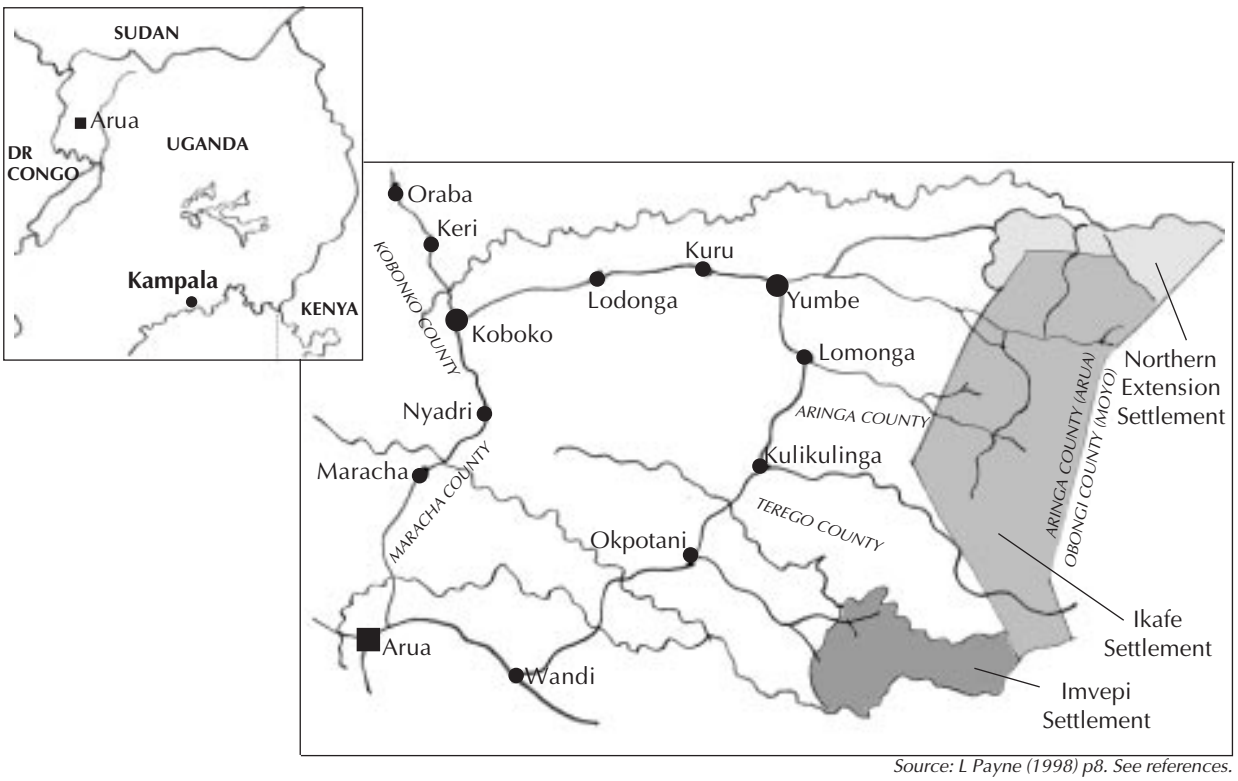
An Area of Insecurity

The Ikafe project was developed in order to support approximately 55,000 Sudanese refugees relocated from transit camps in Koboko town at the Uganda/Sudan border from mid-1994 onwards, following security problems. The settlement area is large (more than 50,000 hectares (ha) or more than 120,000 acres) and covers the area called Ikafe in Aringa county and Imvepi in Terego county – the latter being smaller than the former. It is further away from the Sudan (and DRC) border than Koboko, though still relatively close albeit less accessible. Local Ugandans occupied small parts of the refugee settlement area at the start of the project, and they and others from the district used the area as a hunting ground. The land is rocky and large parts are not suitable for agriculture; most of the land was covered with bush and was infested with tsetse fly and poisonous scorpions and snakes.

South Sudanese had been fleeing to Arua district in Uganda since 1993 because of the fighting between the government of Sudan (GoS) and factions of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the rebel forces. The SPLA allegedly infiltrated the refugee camps in Uganda and the GoS went as far as bombing Koboko – for example, in early 1996 when the review was about to start. The government of Uganda (GoU) has often been accused of supporting the SPLA and in turn has accused the GoS of supporting Ugandan rebels with bases in southern Sudan. The GoU was keen to avoid further deterioration of relations with the GoS and stopped fuelling rumours that it supported the SPLA. It was this situation that led to the pressure on the GoU and international agencies such as UNHCR to establish the Ikafe and Imvepi settlements (referred to as 'Ikafe' in the rest of this paper).

The north and west of Uganda are plagued by a number of Ugandan rebel forces, one of which is the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF). At the time of the review WNBF had bases in south Sudan and Zaire (now the DRC). They were, and are, allegedly supported by the GoS, the former regime of Zaire and other political groupings in the DRC. They are said to have many supporters in Arua district, and more specifically in Aringa county. People in this part of Uganda suffered from the fighting and insecurity before and immediately after the fall of Idi Amin in 1979 and many stayed in south Sudan until the early 1980s. There is resentment among some of these former refugees regarding their treatment in Sudan during their exile, and it is

Figure 1: The Ikafe Refugee Settlement



Source: L Payne (1998) p8. See references.

alleged that much of the population has remained loyal to Amin and his sympathisers, including the rebel WNBF.

The activity of the WNBF increased in early 1996 in the run up to national elections in Uganda and there were reports from refugee camps in Uganda that the WNBF was attacking members of the Dinka, a nomadic people in south Sudan who are seen to support the SPLA. On 18 April 1996, during the first stage of the review, Oxfam staff and vehicles were targeted and held at gun point by WNBF rebels who forced them to help with arms transports. Ugandan soldiers were subsequently moved in for protection, but in September 1996 a group of them who were accompanied on an investigation by a key informant to the review (the camp commandant, an official of the ministry of local government, MoLG) were killed in an ambush before the review report was finalised.[5]

Refugees Movements In and Out of Ikafe

The Ikafe project is now closed following the return to Sudan of many refugees. However, the Imvepi settlement still exists as a project for a smaller number of refugees and carries with it some of the ideals and learning from the larger Ikafe project.

From the beginning of the review in April 1996 the staff of international agencies and also local officials had to evacuate the project a number of times, and refugees have continually moved back and forth following threats, actual attacks, rapes, and other violence. The review was initiated in the period when violence was on the increase. Precisely because the future cannot be known and because the situation was so volatile, there are important methodological lessons for a participatory review approach in complex emergencies.

The Ikafe Project and Structures of Governance

UNHCR and local authorities started the transfer of refugees from Koboko to Ikafe in the summer of 1994 before the tri-partite agreement with Oxfam as the third party and 'main implementing agency' was signed. From late 1994 Oxfam took on tasks such as infrastructure development (roads and buildings), refugee registration and food distribution, part of the healthcare provision (in Imvepi), land allocation, food and water distribution, aspects of community development, distribution of agricultural inputs and a forestry programme, and income generation. To ensure the smooth running of the project Oxfam set up a structure of sectors into which the aforementioned

functions were divided, with a central management team and accounting/administrative unit.[6] Two other international NGOs were also active in Ikafe: JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) in the education sector, and AAIN (Action Africa in Need)[7] in the health sector in the main Ikafe settlement.

Oxfam's response to the refugees' move to Ikafe was unique because it attempted to follow a developmental approach in an emergency situation: it settled refugees in small dispersed groups and allocated agricultural land to them to enable them to develop a level of food self-sufficiency. The land allocation was temporary. Based on discussions between Ugandan authorities and UNHCR the process of land registration was managed by a department of the MoLG with national responsibility for refugees (a process called 'gazetting').[8] Discussions about land use were held with local authorities and traditional leaders who would formally loose their control of the land through gazetting.

The project was also unique within Oxfam as the agency rarely takes on so many diverse tasks in relief operations. Generally it focuses on water, sanitation and health, and is sometimes involved in the distribution of food and non-food items. As mentioned earlier, only two other NGOs operated in Ikafe in education and health respectively. The remainder of the project was implemented by Oxfam and the different project sectors were expected to be well managed and mutally supportive as a result.

Refugees were settled in small units known as 'blocks': groups of about 24 households. Three to four blocks made up a 'village', and on average five villages made up a 'point'. The Ikafe/Imvepi settlement was made up of five zones, each comprising an average of nine points. The refugees were allocated small plots of land for housing and agriculture, the size of which depended on discussions between Oxfam, UNHCR and Ugandan authorities, and on soil quality and pressures to allocate land. Total size allocated to refugees ranged from a minimum of 0.2ha per family (in most cases later increased to 0.4ha/family) to a maximum of 0.33ha per capita[9] which was thought to provide the means for minimal survival.

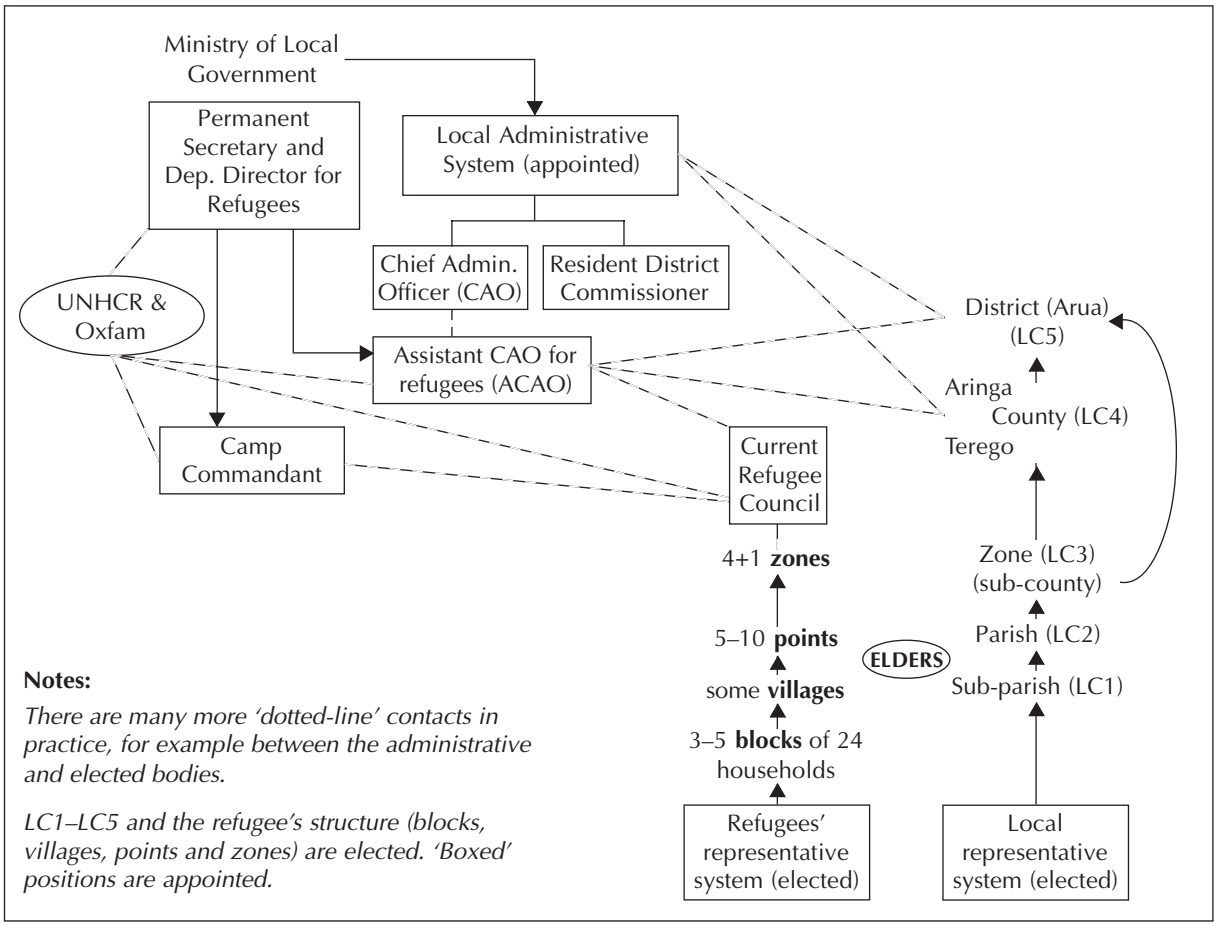
Oxfam made a major effort to establish refugee representation to the project managers and to the local political and administrative structures. However, the refugees could not vote or take part in the local political structures of Uganda, known as local councils (LCs). This structure starts with elections at the sub-parish level (LC1) and progresses to involve elections to nominate citizens to represent the population at the county level in LC4 and at district level in LC5. The refugee project developed representative refugee bodies which ran parallel to the lower levels of the LC structure, as expressed in Figure 2.[10] However, this had no legal status and was only based on discussion with refugee leaders. The refugees did not really relate to the LC structure, however, and there were reports of Ugandan and Sudanese elders working together to resolve local disputes independently. These elders are often closely related to representatives on the elected bodies. They have formal meetings and a hierarchy, and form a separate and 'traditional' system of governance.

The solid arrows in Figure 2 suggest the formal links and lines of authority and representation; the dotted lines show some of the relations and hierarchy of Ugandan administrative structures with respect to the presence of the refugees. The figure suggests that confusion about responsibilities and reporting lines are all too possible. Different departments of the MoLG are responsible for local administration and for responses to the refugees, while both must somehow relate to the elected (political) structure of local councils (from the lowest LC1 level to the district LC5 level). The national political structure is not shown in the diagram although it obviously wields considerable influence over the MoLG. Neither is the military, which operates in the area in response to rebel activity and threats from Sudan.

Stakeholders in Ikafe and its Review

At the outset of the review important decisions had to be made with regard to who to involve, and in what way. The review was prepared by the Oxfam project management team facilitated primarily by two Oxfam staff from the head office in Oxford, UK. A research team was formed to facilitate interviews and meetings. This was made up of representatives of the main stakeholders, namely the refugees, local host population and Oxfam (and other NGO) staff. The members of the team were not mandated by the stakeholder groups to formally represent the positions of those stakeholders, however they took part in much of the analysis and were seen as able to informally voice the concerns

Figure 2: Governing Structures

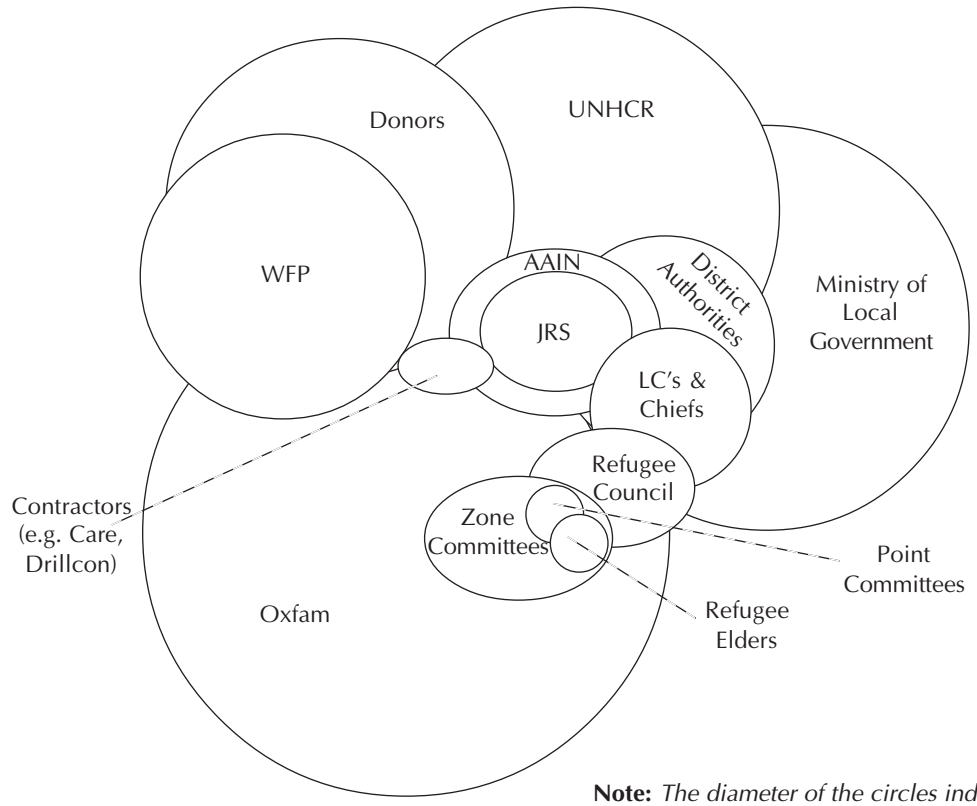


of those they represented. The research team had a total of 17 members, seven of whom were men and 10 women; six were refugees, two were members of local political structures (LCs), and the others were NGO staff, partly from Aringa and Terego counties.

Early in the review the team formulated its own (diverse) perspectives on stakeholders' ideas, influence and relationships, for example as expressed by the team members called 'Oxfam managers' in Figure 3. The diagram represents the various stakeholders from the perspective of Oxfam managers who saw Oxfam as comparatively important in the lives of the people affected by, or dependent on, the success or failure of the project.

The selection of the review team members was based on a number of criteria, including gender, fluency in English, and experience with participatory assessments and research. There is more on the methodology of the review in Sections 4 and 5.

Figure 3: Venn Diagram of Relationships According to Oxfam Managers (as on 11.4.96)



Note: *The diameter of the circles indicates relative (perceived) influence or importance; the overlap indicates (perceived) intensity of the relationship.*

3

Outcomes of the Review

Stakeholders' Perspectives on Project Impact

The different interest groups had different aims, though there were also some common interests. UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) were clear that their mandate was to support the refugees in line with international standards and within resource constraints, while local Ugandan officials were interested in supporting refugees and benefiting from the infrastructure and services themselves. The refugees wanted to shelter from the violence in their home country, educate their children and build up assets to take home. Oxfam wished to support the refugees, work towards equal opportunities in the livelihoods of men and women, and also be fair to (vulnerable) local people. The GoU's prime concern was security for its own population and the refugees, and it also wished to support local economic development. While these aims were not in themselves necessarily contradictory, in practice they led to controversy and strong disagreement. This was fuelled by what could be called 'context' : the complex political processes that caused people to flee their country, in the middle of which several agencies were trying to reduce human suffering.

Different stakeholder groups thus developed different ideas about what was being achieved, what the main problems were, and who caused them.

Agencies' Achievements and Perspective on Impact

Oxfam, and also the smaller agencies of AAIN and JRS, achieved a lot. The agencies developed infrastructure according to plans, set up food and water delivery, as well as health and educational services which benefited all refugees and many of the local people who lived within the Ikafe settlement. Oxfam was also involved in forestry and community development and distributed seeds and tools to most refugees, assisted in cultivation and allocated land to all.

Staff and managers acknowledged that the programme had difficulties in achieving the short-term aims of service delivery due to resource problems (in most sectors), and that the lack of agricultural land and security problems prevented them from achieving the longer term aim of self-reliance for all refugees. They also acknowledged that communication with the local population should have been better. But, according to the agencies, the impact of the project was positive and included:

- a strong boost for the local economy (due to the influx of money and availability of cheap labour);
- improved services for the refugees and many locals;
- improved health and nutritional status of the refugees;
- the allocation of land to many refugees (women and men alike);
- a certain degree of food security for some refugees who managed to harvest a small crop.

Oxfam also felt that it invested a lot in developing a representative system of/for refugees, and that it made many attempts to communicate with all parties involved. Communication blocks between other stakeholders actually caused difficulties for Oxfam. For instance, there was a lack of communication between Ugandan authorities and UNHCR, and the local population and refugees.

Impact According to the Local Ugandan Population

The leaders of the local population in Aringa and Terego counties were, on the whole, negative about the refugees and the response of the agencies. They claimed to have invited the refugees and to have offered their land, but they expected more in return. They acknowledged that the local economy was supported by some funds and activity, but complained that not enough local people were employed and not enough contracts were given to local contractors. They agreed that infrastructure improvements benefited some locals, but would have liked more infrastructure development in the main town of Yumbe instead of in the centre of the refugee settlement. They also complained about a lack of consultation on the allocation of land to refugees, and violations of some sacred sites. Local women voiced concern regarding their daughters who became involved with staff (some of whom were from outside the district), and regarding the general security situation (see Figure 4).

Impact According to Sudanese Refugees

In 1994 refugee leaders had been consulted about the move to Ikafe from the transit camps of Koboko, and some said that the situation had since improved. For example, infant mortality improved considerably. However, there was also dissatisfaction among many refugees, for example concerning the fact that water and food provision was irregular, land was often of bad quality, seeds and tools were delivered late (in 1995), alternative livelihood opportunities were extremely limited, and markets were far away. They wanted a better representative system and improved communication with agencies and the local population.

Refugee women are often heads of households. In this case their particular concerns centred around food and water provision (which were indeed irregular), issues related to (domestic) violence, and also problems with the increased informal relationships and pregnancies outside marriage: gender roles in households and communities were changing as a result of living in a refugee settlement (see Figure 5).

The Position of Other Stakeholders

The national and district authorities were particularly interested in political stability and it was their responsibility to provide security. The WFP has stressed that food supplies were irregular, partly because of shortages 'in the pipeline' and partly because of insecurity on the roads from Kampala. They also explained that supplies were unlikely to improve due to donor fatigue in the international community. UNHCR representatives explained that they were committed to achieving food self-sufficiency through settlement, but that this aim had to be considered in the light of the security situation and the dissatisfaction of the local population. First and foremost their obligations were to the refugees; once refugees returned to Sudan the infrastructure would remain under the control of the GoU (the MoLG, not the local leaders) as a contingency for the possible settlement of other refugees.

Land, Agriculture and Trees

The review found that without resolving issues of access, ownership and control of land, as well as the quantity and quality of land to be allocated to the refugees, only some refugees would ever be able to be food self-sufficient; also, local conflicts would only be fuelled further.

The legal status of the land in the Ikafe project was very complex. The permanent secretary of the MoLG gazetted the demarcated area known as Ikafe; once gazetted, the MoLG became the legal owners of the land until the land was de-gazetted. It is normal practice to gazette land in Uganda when a refugee settlement is created; at the same time the Ugandan constitution recognises the traditional/collective land rights of those living in the area, and indeed local elders see themselves as the rightful owners of the land. However, the

international community paid for the infrastructure development within the refugee settlement and wanted it to be retained for the use of the site even if the refugees were to leave; officials of the MoLG Arua district were of the same opinion.

The issue of land was one of the most important sources of discontent for the host population. Leaders wanted infrastructure in the main town of Yumbe in Aringa county in return for offering land to refugees. They also wanted high level jobs for locals in the Oxfam programme, but the national authorities and international agencies were unable to respond to such demands. Legally, and as per the tri-partite agreement between the GoU, UNHCR and Oxfam, infrastructure development had to take place in the gazetted area, that is, the actual refugee settlement. Localised conflicts occurred where nationals wanted to keep the land for cattle grazing where refugees were settled.

While UNHCR negotiated with the central authorities, Oxfam negotiated with the local residents (elders). It was Oxfam which actually demarcated the land for the Sudanese refugees as per the guidelines of the Ugandan authorities and UNHCR. Oxfam disputed these guidelines on several grounds, mainly because it believed that the land for the refugees should be sufficient for developing a livelihood and not just sufficient for mere survival: there was clearly disagreement about the project's objective of self-sufficiency and what that entailed. Certainly no recent or detailed topographical maps or aerial photographs were used during negotiation and demarcation.

The refugees were transferred from Koboko to Ikafe beginning in 1994. They were allocated agricultural plots of varying size. This process was dependent on the changing policies of land allocation, an inability to deal with the high numbers of refugees arriving at a particular time, and (local) land availability.

Because a detailed soil and vegetation map of Ikafe did not exist Oxfam commissioned a soil survey, collaborated on a forestry (bio-mass) inventory, carried out a crude land use inventory, and made some crop yield measurements. This was done to ensure that the plots allocated would be sufficient. As mentioned earlier, Ikafe consists of large outcrops of rock and gravel, and soils are predominantly sandy with a low water holding capacity and low fertility. The crop productivity of some local farmers showed very low yields, and the review found that some of the local people reserved the best quality land for themselves. Local people used the land for a few years before shifting to new fields in order to cope with lowering soil fertility levels.

The review found that the available land was not sufficient in terms of food production and would not support the large numbers of refugees. Furthermore, a substantial number of families lacked skills, labour or the required health to cultivate land and achieve results similar to the local population. The host population was also agrieved because its hunting ground was reduced and there were reports of sacred sites being violated. The project made attempts to re-forest by setting up a tree nursery that gave free seedlings, though in practice mostly to the host population. This was meant to prevent environmental degradation associated with the sudden increase of population, and in the medium and long term provide fuelwood.

Food for Refugees

Food was a major problem in Ikafe. Due to the lack of commitment on the part of international donors, general shortages in WFP, and insecurity that affected food transport, food supplies from WFP were erratic. As a result Oxfam was unable to deliver food in sufficient quantity and at regular intervals. With renewed insecurity in the region food was clearly an important issue. The problem of erratic food supply was exacerbated by the fact that the refugees were not told when the next rations would arrive. Indeed Oxfam staff did not know. Delays frequently occurred, and WFP policy is not to give retrospective rations. People were both hungry and angry. Donors such as the EU began to ask why the Sudanese refugees had not achieved a greater degree of self-reliance. They were not well-informed about the causes and their lack of trust, along with other donors, was fuelled by inflated registration figures in the refugee camps.

The review concluded that the food shortages actually undermined attempts at self-reliance, the main project goal. Refugees complained of weakness, loss of energy for cultivation, and of having to eat their own seeds in order to survive. Instead of cultivating their own plots, many refugees were forced to sell their labour to nationals in order to earn food for themselves and their families. Others sold tools, plastic sheets and other non-food items in order to buy food. The negative impact of hunger caused families to fragment as both men and women left to seek paid employment.

Lack of Livelihoods Diversity

The review team concluded that there was a lack of alternative income generating activities and possibilities for refugees. The international and local response to the Sudanese refugees did not encourage refugees to develop their own form of livelihoods, although petty trade and other activities were taken up even by some of the poorest refugees. The project plan assumed that all refugees were capable agriculturists and, if given enough land, would be able to achieve self-reliance. While approximately 80 per cent of refugees were probably former agriculturists, this left 20 per cent (some 10,000 refugees) who were not. The low quality of land in Ikafe made it unlikely the refugees would manage to become self-reliant, and well-being ranking in refugee villages also showed that there was a whole strata of people who would be unable to farm for other reasons, such as bad health.

Table 1 synthesises well-being information collected during the review. Well-being is largely related to skills that refugees had prior to coming to Uganda and their physical strength as labourers/farmers.

Research during and after the first stage of the review suggested that a significant proportion of refugees had formerly been traders and/or had a skill they could exploit to support their families. However, many were unable to use their skills because of tools and materials shortages, insecurity, distance to markets, and problems with formal permission to move and trade in Uganda. An Oxfam consultant to Ikafe argued for greater efforts to lobby the national government and international community for freer movement and the opening up of other livelihood possibilities, but this seemed to ask too much from what was, after all, an operational relief project.[11] However, some alternatives were allowed: refugees were able to

Table 1: Well-being Ranking of Refugees

High Well-being	Average Well-being	Low Well-being	Very Low Well-being
• employed by an international agency in Ikafe/Imvepi • enough capital to run a small trade (hotel, restaurant etc) in Ikafe/ Imvepi	• enough labour in the family to farm donated land • small amount of capital to trade (sell beer, fish, tea) in the refugee settlement • those who have a technical skill (for example, a mechanic, bicycle repairer, carpenter, teacher) and can earn money from this activity • those who own some livestock, for example, goats, a cow, some chickens • those who are strong (can construct their own house, latrine and shower shelter) and can sell their labour to nationals	• those with no capital to engage in any petty trading activities • those families who are short of labour (due to ill health, disability, death) • those who have been transferred to areas where land is infertile (rocky or water logged)	• those who have sold all their assets • those who consumed own seeds and sold all non-food items in order to buy food • those who are physically disabled and cannot sell their labour • those families who don't have labour even to farm the land they have been given (unaccompanied orphans, weak widows, disabled etc.)

Note: *This table is based on well-being ranking in four refugee communities with a range of informants, the majority women. After the first stage of the review community research in May/June 1996 confirmed and refined these findings.*

travel temporarily outside gazetted areas, and under certain circumstances were able to initiate businesses. The review recommended that in order to promote actively the diversification of livelihoods, regulations should be revisited and Oxfam would lobby the GoU to allow refugees to do more.

Insecurity

The main reason behind the GoU's decision to move refugees from Koboko to Ikafe was increased security. However, growing insecurity in Ikafe/ Imvepi destabilised the settlement and made it difficult to achieve project objectives (as became clear during the review); later it was virtually impossible. At the time of the review threats of violence and general insecurity were increasing at different levels:

- Ugandan rebels, reputedly supported by the Khartoum government, increased their activity in the region in an attempt to destabilise it both before and after the May/June 1996 elections. Camp staff had to be evacuated several times and the refugees left their settlements. Under such circumstances Oxfam staff were unable to deliver regular food/water to refugees, let alone work towards wider and longer term goals.

- The relationship between the project and some local representatives of the Aringa community also threatened security. For example, verbal and written death threats were made against NGO staff in April 1996 at the time of the review. The stated causes of dissatisfaction included the lack of infrastructure development in Yumbe town, the low numbers of Aringa staff in senior positions in the project, the behaviour of certain NGO staff, and the violation of ceremonial areas by refugees.

- Gun robberies and looting, carried out by both nationals and alleged SPLA deserters, affected both communities.

- Inter-household and community violence among Sudanese refugees was increased in situations of shortage.

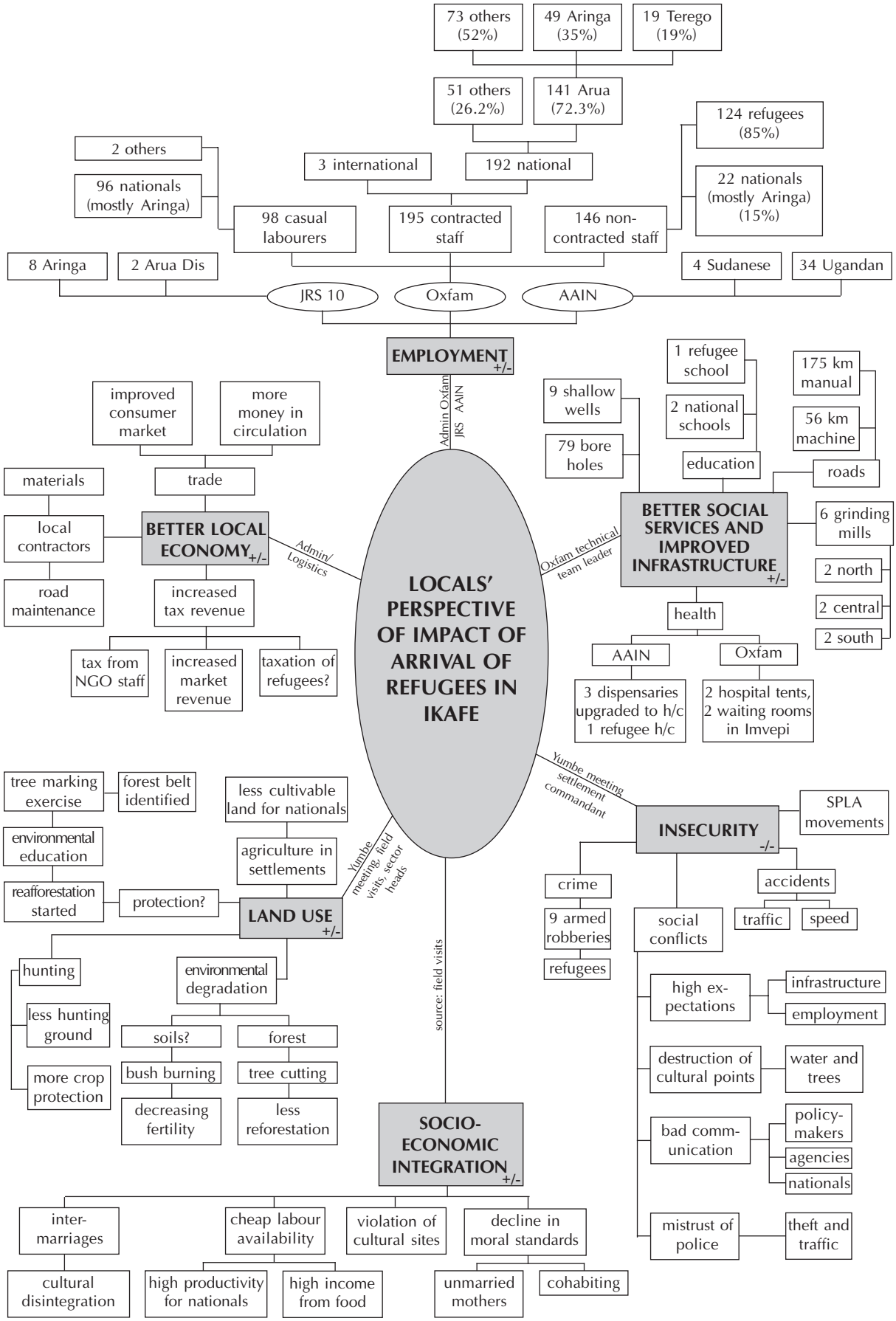
Communication, Integration, Representation

International agencies and the national authorities were not clear in their communication to both refugees and nationals (that is, local council representatives, elders, etc) about their objectives. This created confusion, thwarted expectations and led to (threats of) aggression. Local people, including leaders, knew very little about the tri-partite agreement between Oxfam, UNHCR and the GoU. Such important information should have been transmitted through the LCs and administrative channels down to the county levels and below. That this did not happen in a satisfactory way was partly because of local politics. Communication at other levels was also a problem. Technical staff (food distributors, land surveyors etc) had not been trained to communicate with and listen to refugees/ nationals, even though they were the interface between Oxfam and the refugee and national communities. There were also claims of abusive and racist staff.

Oxfam set up a refugee representative system to facilitate refugees' participation in decision-making at programme level, the management of infrastructure, and the integration of refugees into Ugandan society (see Figure 2). Oxfam encouraged refugee councils at all levels to elect women, albeit without a quota system. The councils all have a minimum of one woman member, though several have more. Some women members of the umbrella Refugee Council expressed concern about the voice of women, but they also acknowledged that there were more female representatives in the Sudan before they became refugees. In general, however, the refugees complained that the system of refugee councils was of little use in practice, and described it as little more than window dressing.

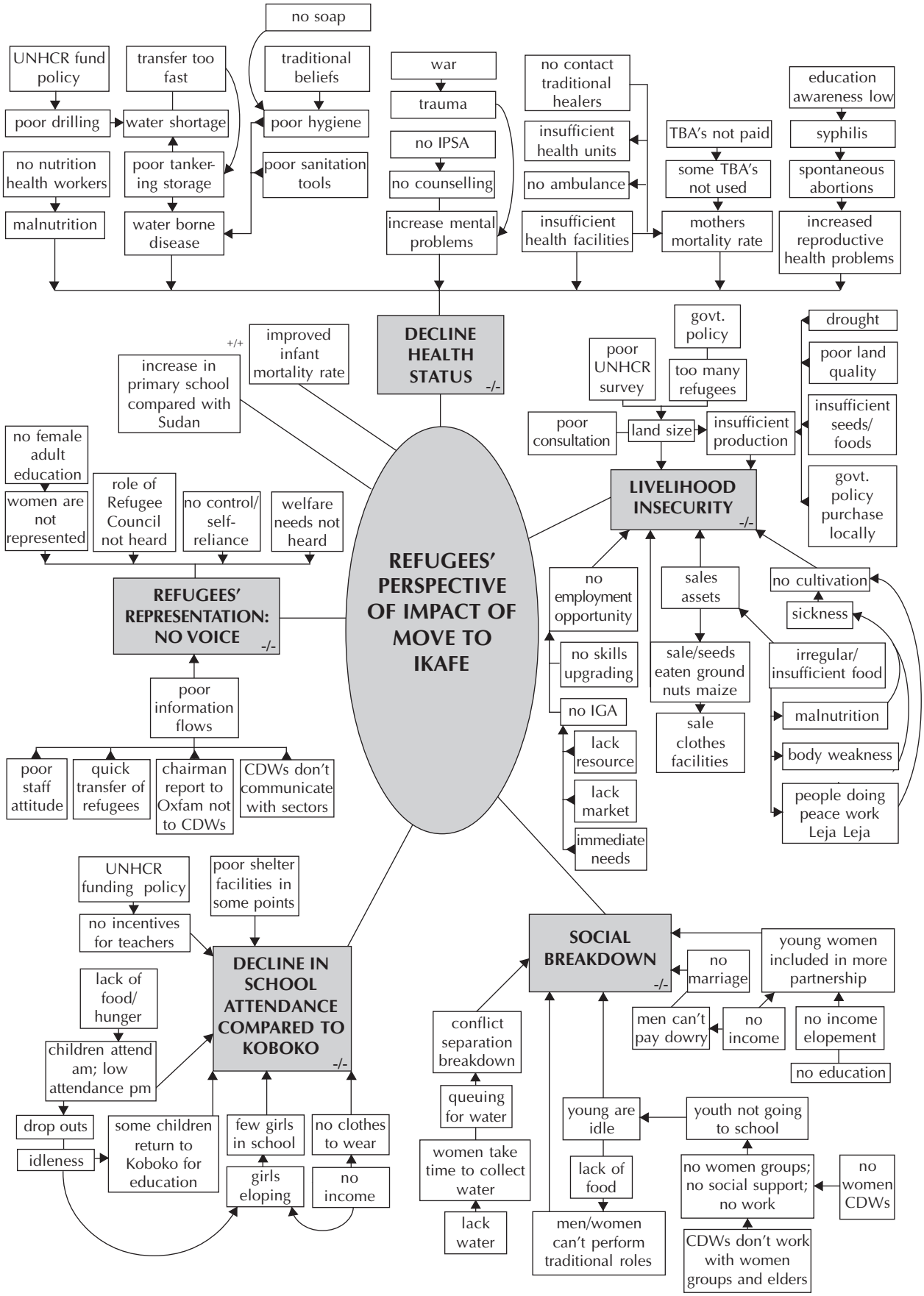
The refugee council system was set up to mirror the local council structure and encourage community integration. But the structure was not officially recognised by the Ugandan government and, as aliens, refugee council members did not have the right to vote in local council meetings. The umbrella Refugee Council was only recognised as a welfare structure for the refugees. Joint management of infrastructure between refugees and the local host population had been a goal but had not taken off.

Figure 4: Impact of Refugee Arrival, Local Ugandan Perspective



Note: *The +/+ signs represent the overall feeling of the group. +/+ relates to only positive impacts, +/- represents gains and losses and -/- mainly negative impacts*

Figure 5: Impact of Move to Ikafe, Refugee Perspective



Abbreviations: *CDWs: Community Development Workers, IPSA: International NGO of councillors/war victims, IGA: Income Generation Activities, TBA: Traditional Birth Atrtendant*

Notes: *The +/+ signs represent the overall feeling of the group. +/+ relates to only positive impacts, +/- represents gains and losses and -/- mainly negative impacts. Note also that the arrows represent a causal relationship.*

4

Review Methodology

The Review Process

The process followed by the participatory review can be summarised in the following steps (see Table 2 on page 17).[12] These steps were not taken exactly in the sequence presented below; as the introduction stressed this was not a designed process but rather an iterative one, based on the security situation, logistical limitations, the outcome of previous meetings, and much more.

The review team:

1. *Collected secondary data and studied existing information on the region/project*: The purpose and timing of this step is obvious: the review team needed to be well-informed and to avoid re-inventing any wheels. External information and project documents were collected and studied by the lead reviewers and some Oxfam managers.

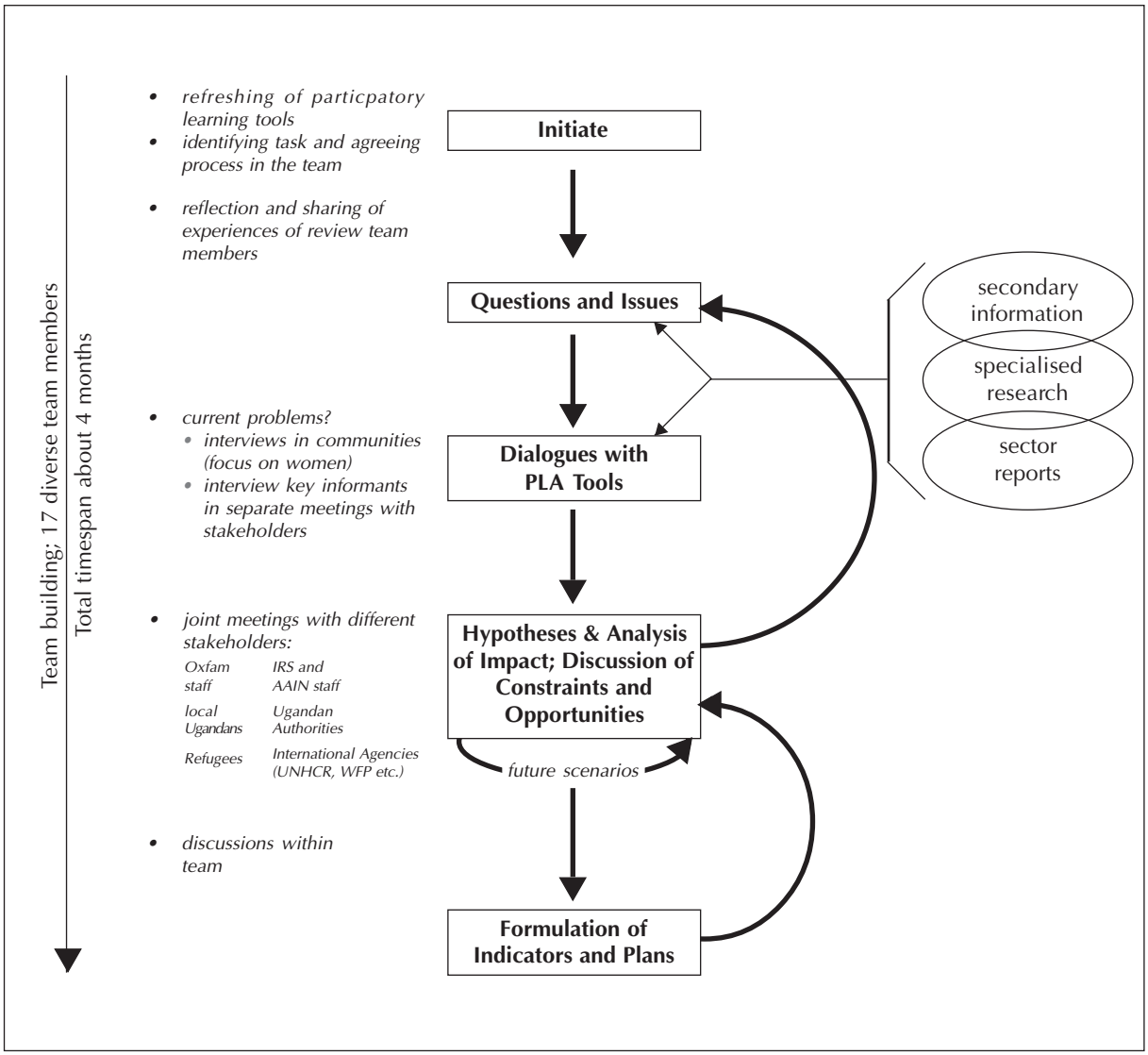
2. *Revisited tools, behaviour and process aspects of participatory rural appraisal, or PRA (each team member had previously received training in PRA)*: It was seen to be important that all had a good understanding of the tools and principles of PRA and learning. Some time was therefore spent on this at the outset.[13]

3. *Reflected on the experiences and perspectives of members of the review team itself*: The team was split into sub-teams (of refugees, local Ugandans, Oxfam managers) which formulated their own perspectives on relations, problems and achievements of the Ikafe project before actually starting interviews and community meetings. This stimulated the first discussions and enabled the next step.

4. *Formulated the hypotheses for the review and outlined the process of learning during the review*: Without developing a very detailed plan the team agreed a process outline which articulated the central questions that needed to be addressed in dialogue with the different stakeholders. This was based on the team's initial understanding of the problems and relationships, their own experiences, and secondary information.

5. *Analysed the different aims/objectives of the stakeholders*: Based on documents, initial (team) analysis and the special reports written by NGO managers, the team's main facilitators proposed short formulations of the different and partly contradictory aims of the various stakeholders. This was 'verified' in the team and in meetings

Figure 6: The Ikafe Review Process



with individual stakeholder groups and used for understanding the conflict and for formulating opportunities for agreement and improvement.

6. *Organised separate meetings with particular stakeholders and representatives*: Meetings with separate groups of refugee leaders and local people (youth, elders), charted the main concerns of these groups. PRA tools such as matrices were used to chart different perspectives on problems and their causes, and the responsible organisations.

7. *Interviewed key informants*: Some interviews were held with officials and Oxfam staff and managers in order to understand and 'map' the diversity of the perspectives further. This work was aimed at bringing in non-resident officials and managers in particular; it also involved several discussions with resident Oxfam management.

8. *Facilitated focused dialogues in communities*: In some refugee communities separate meetings were held in order to learn about the perspectives of 'ordinary' people. PRA tools such as vulnerability and well-being ranking were used. The main objective of this step was to learn about the perspective on change and impact of refugee women who did not usually participate in the larger meetings.

9. *Commissioned, studied and discussed sector reports (of NGOs)*: The review team commissioned special reports by the managers of all the project sectors managed by Oxfam, as well as reports from JRS and AAIN. These covered basic statistics, achievements, current problems and possible solutions. These reports helped the overall focus of the review in terms of assessing impact – that is, on achieving the project's higher level objectives and analysing the changes in the lives and livelihoods of the

refugees and local people. It was also a way of ensuring that the separational and intermediary achievements of the Oxfam programme, as well as the sectors covered by AAIN and JRS, were given due attention.

10. *Wrote up the impact of the Ikafe project as perceived by different groups*: The teams created summary diagrams and wrote up the perspectives on impacts of the main stakeholder groups based on the initial meetings and interviews.

11. *Developed and discussed future scenarios and potential aims*: As the project developed, discussions started to incorporate new draft project aims. These applied in particular to future scenarios which represented varying degrees of conflict. However, refugee members of the team found it difficult to see beyond the scenario of low level conflict and staying in Ikafe.

12. *Formulated key constraints that were stopping the Ikafe project meeting its aims*: The team analysed the objectives from the stakeholder groups and their different perspectives on impact as concluded from the first and separate meetings and interviews. This was written up as a summary and diagram of the main constraints faced in satisfying the needs and interests of the refugees and the host population in particular.

13. *Formulated strategies for overcoming those constraints*: The team formulated draft recommendations regarding strategies for all the main stakeholder groups. This was discussed at joint meetings and also in separate meetings of Oxfam staff.

14. *Organised mixed meetings for stakeholders and representatives*: In the first stage of the review a large joint meeting of local stakeholders was organised to discuss impacts, achievements and constraints. In August a similar meeting which included officials from Arua and Kampala focused on the recommendations for change.

15. *Formulated proxy indicators for the success of these alternative strategies*: The lead reviewers formulated indicators for success as well as a monitoring system. These were discussed with Oxfam staff, including some employed refugees.

16. *Written draft and final report*: The lead reviewers wrote a draft report after the first stage of the review (after April 1996) and a final report that was based on new field research (May–July 1996), meetings and discussions in July and August, and written comments by Oxfam staff.

Table 2 gives an idea of the timing of the main activities of the review.

Table 2: The Actual Review Programme

Date	Activity
3–9 April 1996	Collected secondary data; key interviews in Kampala and Arua.
10 April–26 April	Introduction of the review. Stakeholder analysis with Ugandan nationals and refugees; team discussion; community visits with PRA tools; interviews with key informants; meetings with different stakeholders; formulation of draft recommendations/ strategies for the future; meetings with a broad group of stakeholders; re-formulation of priority recommendations; formulation of indicators of success; debrief with Oxfam managers and Kampala-based representatives of the MoLG, UNHCR, WFP, AAIN and JRS.
29 April–2 May	Finalised the draft review report and debriefed in Oxford, UK.
17 July	Debriefed with two MoLG representatives who were visiting the UK.
May–July	Field research by the Ikafe research team.
30 July–3 August	Preparation and big meeting in project area with most stakeholders.
August– September	Discussions among Oxfam project staff and comments on draft report.
4 October	Debriefed with Oxfam staff in Oxford.
6 October 1996	Report finalised.

Members of the team, in particular the two lead reviewers, had the important task of summarising opinions and data from the interviews and meetings. This was presented in later meetings and verified (and sometimes amended) before further steps were taken. This process provided fora for listening and negotiation. The overall picture of constraints and the formulation of draft recommendations was also subsequently discussed and partly amended during large meetings.

A large number of groups and individuals participated in many different ways in this review. This meant that management of the process of stakeholder engagement was possibly the most difficult task, especially given the iterative nature of the review.

Table 3 outlines the participation methods of the main stakeholder groups; it also gives a short summary of their objectives.

When summarising stakeholder objectives in this way it is apparent that the review considered a number of different perspectives, but that differences within the groups of stakeholders may have been paid less attention. Gender-based differences are evident; there are also class and wealth differences among the refugees and the host population, and ethnicity played an important role in the political context. The review attempted to map all these different perspectives. As suggested in the next section it was not fully successful in this regard.

Table 3: Objectives and Participation Methods of Main Stakeholders

Main Stakeholders	Objectives	Participation Methods
UNHCR and WFP	To support the refugees to international standards and within resource constraints.	• interviewed; • written communication was analysed; • spoke at the final stage of the review.
Local Ugandan officials and leaders	To support refugees and benefit from infrastructure and services themselves.	• interviewed; • meetings between themselves and the review team; • participated in several joint meetings; • sat on the review team; • demanded, and were given, special meetings with Ikafe management.
Sudanese Refugees	To shelter from the violence in their home country, educate their children, and build up assets to take home.	• interviewed using PRA tools; • sat on the review team; • participated in separate and joint meetings.
Oxfam, AAIN and JRS	To support refugees, work towards equal opportunities in the livelihoods of men and women, and be fair to (vulnerable) local people.	• sat on the review team; • written (agency) materials were consulted; • programme sectors produced statements of achievement; • bilateral meetings between managers and some from the review team; • meetings of staff and some from the review team; • involved in several general meetings.
Government of Uganda	Security for its own population and the refugees; to support local economic development.	• some officials were interviewed; • data collected and studied; • some participated in joint meetings; • spoke at the final stage of the review.

Methodological Principles of the Review

The review focused on looking forwards while reviewing the project's current impact. Closely related this principle of learning is the idea of transparency and clarity in briefings and meetings.

The previous section highlighted that learning happened in a participatory way, and that different stakeholders participated in a different way. The idea of bringing various stakeholders into the process, of enabling them to speak, listen, share and negotiate, is a key factor when wanting to establish 'ownership' of findings, conclusions and ideas for improvement. However, progress in a process of learning requires facilitation and some sort of process management which is particularly difficult to articulate and plan in a volatile situation such as a complex emergency. Process management requires facilitative behaviour and language, and imaginative ideas about the management of meetings. An example of this took place in the final review when almost all of the important stakeholders took part in a parliamentary-style meeting which enabled open and constructive dialogue.

The idea of participation – albeit in different ways for different stakeholders and dependent upon possibilities that may have been limited by violence and insecurity – prompts the principle of inclusiveness. In ensuring such participation and inclusiveness the review attempted to work with positive biases in order to address the exclusion of important groups, although it was only partly successful in this respect. The review set out to consult documentation on social differences, include women and men in the review team, interview women in (refugee) settlements, and invite women to attend meetings despite security and cultural obstacles. The review also made an effort to invite representatives from particular ethnic groups, in particular the Dinka refugees, to include elders who held non-formal, traditional authority, and to ensure that proceedings included hosts from Terego county as well as Aringa county.

A further aspect of process management was to ensure ongoing learning within the review team. The team was large and diverse; the majority of members were skilled development practitioners, including some of those recruited from among the refugee and host populations. However, only a small number were experienced in consulting documentation, reporting, and in the management of large and often heated meetings. None of the team, including the two lead facilitators, had experience with intense learning and negotiation processes in such a volatile context. Because of this somewhat experimental nature and also because the review team was so large, it needed to spend considerable time on sharing and reflecting on progress. Because sufficient time was not always available this led to a two-tier system where decisions by the lead facilitators were only briefly discussed with some of the other team members.

Another principle was that team members should be chosen from the main stakeholder groups (refugees, host population, agency staff), though they were not mandated by these groups. The team was seen to have a primarily facilitative role: it shared its views and experiences, and was also expected to be able to articulate the concerns and ideas of its peers. It was also hoped that the team would be able to influence its peers – for example, in order to overcome controversy. To some extent this was achieved as far as the refugees and Oxfam staff were concerned. However, although some Oxfam staff were local people with their own social connections the specially selected, two host-population representatives were two younger women from lower LCs who had very limited influence on their male and older peers.

The team collected both qualitative and quantitative data. However, during the course of the process the emphasis became more qualitative; most of the 'numbers' came from project files and from sector reports produced on request by project managers.

The data, from multiple sources, was collected in multiple ways. The predominantly qualitative data was cross checked by the team, by the lead facilitators, and also through the joint meetings where summaries were presented and discussed before the next steps were taken.

This cross checking increased the trustworthiness of the information and conclusions despite the strong emphasis on the perspectives of stakeholders and the idea of negotiation (as different from the idea of harmonious dialogue).[14] Reaching a high level of trustworthiness of data and conclusions was one of the most important principles of the review. Evaluation of the first stages of the review did, however, suggest that some Oxfam managers – including team members – were critical of the quality of some of the data and the balance of opinions of some of the stakeholders vis-à-vis the others.

Diagrammatic tools were used to facilitate the semi-structured interviews; in the larger meetings they were used as tools to present summarised information and perceptions. The former originated from PRA; the latter were 'mind maps', examples of which were given earlier. Tools like problem matrixes, Venn diagrams and well-being ranking help facilitate discussion among those being interviewed; they provide structure to the interview and also deliver some sort of output – that is, they demonstrate different perspectives on the issue concerned.

In summary, the Ikafe review did not so much attempt to reach a fully objective analysis, rather it started with mapping the diverging perspectives and worked towards increasing understanding and appreciation of achievements as well as concerns of other stakeholders. 'Hard data' which is difficult to dispute is important in such a process. But to many, attributing change remained very subjective and, for example, acknowledging the positive impact of others and taking responsibility for failure (instead of accusing others) was as much a political negotiation as a rational analysis.

5

Lessons from Ikafe

This paper discusses just one case study and has referred only briefly to wider experience, so the conclusions and lessons learnt must be presented with great care.

Reviews undertaken in emergencies are necessarily concerned with the local context and can never be expected to work as a blueprint for other projects. While the Ikafe review was structured and planned in advance it changed over time: plans were adjusted and the review adapted to the events and learning that took place on an almost daily basis. However, some very broad lessons can be drawn. The first group of lessons relates to the management of the review team, the second group is about the management of the review process, and the third relates to the participatory approach. Thereafter follow lessons concerning the objectives of the review, and lessons about the project's strategies.

Lessons Concerning the Management of a Large Review Team

The large number of review team members/ facilitators produced much information and analysis, particularly in their sub-teams. The team functioned well and was able to discuss, cross check and reach consensus on many issues. However, there were also disadvantages and weaknesses. The following lessons relate to the working and achievements of the team.

1. Such a large team and process, if not properly managed, can result in an unmanageable, unfocused amount of information from which no consensus analysis arises. On reflection, a smaller team would be recommended for future work of this kind, for example, a team of two lead reviewers with a maximum of six to eight members from key stakeholder groups.

2. The review team should be chosen carefully. In the case of Ikafe, team members were generally very skilled and experienced. Inspite of this some important skills such as report writing were lacking. The gender balance in the team was good, with slightly more women than men, but in hindsight the team would have benefited from increased representation from the host population. In particular, an influential male from among local youth and elders would have helped communication with this key group.

3. From the start the roles of the review team members were unclear. With hindsight this should have been spelled out more clearly.

4. It was extremely useful to use two external facilitators who were able to work on the review from start to finish. Having two facilitators allowed for the exchange of ideas and division of the workload. However, due to increasing work pressures the two sometimes consulted particular team members which meant a two-tier team emerged.

5. The process would have led to more agreement and firmer commitments to improve communication had more senior people with experience in the analysis of complex development and emergency issues participated.

Lessons Concerning the Management of a Review Process in a Conflict Situation

As pointed out earlier, the management of such a process is itself difficult without the added factor of conflict. The process became very much a 'learning by doing' process and thus required skills that may have been impossible to gain otherwise. The following seven lessons suggest, however, that there are few fundamental differences with what is asserted in standard management literature, except that the situation is more pressured and that there is, at times, an extreme sense of urgency.

1. The importance of good management cannot be overestimated, and good management of a review like this one requires skills, experience and creativity. It requires, for example, experienced reviewers, sensitive behaviour, imaginative tools and ideas for meeting management, constant evaluation and rethinking of options, good communication, and the occasional use of authority.

2. Flexibility in process management is essential. The second stage of the review was in fact not planned due to the amount of work and the fact that, for security reasons, all stakeholders could not be brought together in the first stage.

3. The process was, and should be, essentially iterative. Statements need to be interpreted and verified, and findings and recommendations discussed in wider forums and changed according to new information and agreement between stakeholders, etc.

4. The review began with the assumption that communication between stakeholders was reasonable and that participation could happen in a fairly non-conflictual way; this proved to be wrong. The process invited stakeholders to criticise implementers, and that is important. However, if too much discontent is allowed to surface this could backfire: it is essential that criticism is challenged in a reasonable way too, and that trust is created in the sense that everybody feels he/she is being heard. Risks were taken that were not fully appreciated at the outset of the review.

5. The review process was disrupted by violence. While the chosen period turned out to be a difficult time for a review, the question of whether an ideal moment ever presents itself in a complex emergency or volatile situation is pertinent. It should be understood that such a review needs careful preparation and planning despite the situation on the ground.

6. The review process took a long time by the standards of emergency projects. This implies that financial costs and in particular human and other resources were diverted from what would otherwise have been used for day-to-day project activities. It also implies the need for patience in terms of getting results. The fact that the review was itself a learning process and that the output (a report) was expected to have limited influence on the immediate operation and strategies of the programme emphasises the need to keep all stakeholders on board. A sense of learning for all participants must be aimed at for all stages of the project.

7. There was a certain advantage of having the review led by Oxfam staff – albeit not based in Uganda – rather than by external consultants. This is because external consultants usually have more rigid time commitments and are less capable of responding to organisational demands. Preparation and follow-up was time consuming, including the writing of the final report and debriefings at various stages. Time invested was much more than envisaged, partly because of the experimental nature of the process. Donors demanded briefings, the response to which is easier for people with substantial institutional knowledge. Furthermore, 'behind the scenes' and informal communication in Oxfam proved to be important in communicating the achievements and also weaknesses of the project in a balanced way.

Lessons Concerning the Participatory Approach of the Review

There is much literature and experience with participation in less turbulent development situations and, interestingly, the following four lessons about attempts to involve stakeholders reflect much of that experience.

1. As mentioned earlier, the use of PRA tools and other diagrams greatly benefited the project. While more community-based work, which would have allowed for further cross-checking, had been planned during the first stage this became impossible for security reasons. This field-based research was, however, completed by project staff before the review was finalised.

2. Working with different 'future scenarios' of contexts for the planning and recommendations could not be done. This was mainly because the refugee team members found it difficult to consider 'bad' scenarios. During the second phase of the review, two refugee members conceded that this would have made sense when a 'worse case scenario' actually started to happen. However, they repeated that they would have found it very difficult, and possibly traumatising, to do this initially. In this way the methodology in practice was different from that planned in the way that it remained responsive to those who participated and co-determined how the project evolved. Indeed, a participatory review should be expected to show that methodology and the main actors or proponents are interdependent and impact on each other.

3. The process created high expectations among stakeholders with regard to (future) consultation by Oxfam and other NGOs which was not entirely realistic. These expectations were raised as a result of participation. Communication in this regard should be clear and open at all times.

4. A participatory process can throw up issues and ideas not previously considered or, alternatively, already dismissed by the powers-that-be. For example, some ideas which came to light challenged accepted (international) policies and laws on the free movement of refugees for the purposes of the diversification of livelihoods; in addition, more land was proposed in order that the refugees might exist beyond a basic level of survival. This goes against institutionalised policies of national and internal agencies working with refugees, as does supporting local population and infrastructure. Agencies that want participation must be prepared to have their own policies challenged and must be prepared to lobby others, including governments, as a consequence of listening to and taking others seriously.

Lessons Concerning the Review's Objectives

Project reviews and evaluations normally happen in a retrospective fashion by referring back to stated objectives; they do not necessarily look at unexpected changes irrespective of whether it is a 'development' or 'emergency' under review. Project reviews also commonly assess operational issues and activities at all levels within the project. Sometimes they leave out in-depth analysis of fundamental changes that were achieved – that is, impact. The following three lessons relate to the fact that this review did pay attention to unexpected and fundamental change. Once again the lessons learnt suggest that, while the situation was extreme, lessons learnt weren't necessarily different from those that arise from less controversial development projects.

1. The review agenda was set initially by the Oxfam project management, though it remained open to influence by the review team as well as to the concerns, perceptions and interests of wider stakeholders – most notably the refugees and host population. The review was therefore independent of the initial project objectives, but not bound by them either. This flexibility is important.

2. Ideas concerning objective truth were modified due to the participatory and conflictual nature of the review. Likewise the notion of attribution – of being able to analyse more or less objectively and attribute a certain improvement in livelihoods or problems to the actions of some group or organisation – will be subject to debate and even controversy as the different stakeholders make different claims that need to be negotiated.

3. This review was forced to work with few established baseline data, with unrealistic project objectives, and without agreed (impact) indicators for the success of the project as a whole. Instead of working with predetermined indicators or even predetermined evaluation

criteria and minimum standards, the review worked with broad areas of concern that emerged during the course of the review and that were shared, to a certain extent, by the stakeholders. These constraints overlapped to some extent with what recent literature sums up as a set of evaluation criteria.[15] Within these areas of concern the different stakeholders gave reasons for their particular concerns, which could be called (their) indicators. For example, an indicator for improved water supply was 'shorter queuing' according to the refugees, but locals did not wish to queue at all. The language of indicators may be useful for pinpointing what a particular group says, but in participatory and conflictual processes predetermined indicators or even indicator themes must be handled with great care. Thus the process challenged the idea of fixed or agreed indicators.

Lessons Concerning Ikafe Project Strategies

These lessons from the programme identify ways in which its effectiveness may have been increased:

1. The review was integrated within the overall project. This was key and demanded that post-review, some of the momentum be maintained and the findings followed through, especially by Oxfam staff.

2. The expectation of Oxfam staff was that the review would focus on land and land use potential as the key issue. The broad approach and the attempt to describe and work with the complexity of the situation resulted in a more strategic set of conclusions and ideas for the future, without the marginalisation of land issues.

3. The objectives should have been less ambiguous and more realistic.[16] Even if local violence had decreased and the pursuit of some form of self-sufficiency was more realistic, the objectives would still have encompassed too many sectors and would have been too ambitious. Also, interpretations of the objectives differed. The GoU, local host population and international agencies – in particular WFP and UNHCR – worked on the assumption that the situation was temporary, but the project and many refugees, quite rightly, wanted to incorporate the possibility that they would not return in the foreseeable future. It would possibly have been more realistic to talk of 'security' instead of aiming for sustainable livelihoods, and concepts or objectives like 'self-sufficiency' should have been spelled out more clearly.

6

Final Thoughts

The review made some strategic recommendations to Oxfam. These mainly concerned 'doing things differently' rather them as 'new or more work'. They included:

- lobby and research on improved food provision;
- improve work and communication on land allocation;
- make more effort to achieve self-management of services of refugees (and host population);
- improve communication styles and make more effort to facilitate communication between others;
- make further efforts to raise funds for local development projects;
- lobby for free movement of refugees and activities to increase livelihood diversity.

Management discussions concerning revised and new plans were initiated in August 1996 on the basis of the review, with a view to formulating more achievable aims and objectives and improving monitoring of (impact) indicators. This happened in the second half of 1996 and early 1997.[17]

However, on-going rebel activity and developments in the conflicts and insecurity in Sudan and northwest Uganda meant that Oxfam had to again evacuate staff; later most refugees moved back to Sudan and Oxfam closed the main project. Oxfam is still active in the southern part of the project, Imvepi, which lies in Terego county.

A review of this nature creates the space for people to air their views freely and discuss openly; only transparency and honesty lead to real learning. Despite this openness there was the feeling that the complexity of the situation and of political interests never really surfaced. This prompts the question how much honesty is needed in order to achieve the goals of the refugee response and its review: saving lives, helping to build up livelihoods, and regaining dignity for of all involved.

To host a review like this is a tremendous achievement at a time when many agencies hide most of their problems. It requires great courage to invite such a participatory review, and the Oxfam project management should be applauded for that.

Appendix

The Changing Aims and Objectives of Ikafe

Objectives Before the Review

The following could be called general aims:

To ensure that all services provided within the settlement are coordinated between all key actors; and that services are in line with government and UNHCR refugee administrative and management policy, and within available means and resources; that services are integrated within the host community and government service structures in the district.

A site in which the refugees would be agriculturally productive and economically self-sufficient with little or no outside assistance in the long term for as long as they are in Uganda (Oxfam UK&I, 1996a).

Specific objectives included the following:

1. To ensure refugee welfare in the short and long term through comprehensive and efficient registration that records all demographic characteristics, and to establish effective methods to facilitate the reunion of refugee families.

2. The allocation of residential and agricultural plots to assist the refugees to reconstruct family and community life and to achieve independence from externally provided inputs.

3. The strengthening of effective community structures which are representative of all refugee opinions and concerns in order to facilitate decision-making and self-management at all levels.

4. To ensure vulnerable groups have equal access to basic entitlements and representation and that their special needs are addressed without being isolated from the community.

5. The re-establishment of social and cultural life through facilitating traditional cultural expression, and through identifying and facilitating the adoption of trends, skills, roles and values of Sudanese communities within the Ugandan setting.

6. To ensure refugee welfare in the short and long term through effective and efficient provision of food and non-food items which ensures all refugees are aware of and receive their entitlements in a regular and equitable manner.

7. To control environmental degradation at settlement sites and surrounding areas, and to provide sustainable supply of wood products through community-based natural forest management and reforestation.

8. To assist refugees attain food self-sufficiency through crop production.

9. The contribution towards achievement of economic self-sufficiency by raising household and group productivity in smallscale enterprise.

10. The reduction of transmission of water borne, water based and water washed diseases through the supply of at least 10 litres/person/day.

11. [Health objectives for Imvepi: curative, preventive, integrate with Ugandan structures].

12. To ensure that the refugee services follow Ugandan policy, Ugandans have access to those services, that integration, good relations and coordination are promoted with the host communities and government.

13. To establish ongoing analysis and learning in the project to improve this and other similar projects in Uganda and other parts of the world, and which learning could be applied to fast moving emergencies.

14. [Administration-related objectives].

15. Enhance efficiency of programme management as a result of adequate office and housing facilities, and adequate provision of public buildings, road and other constructed facilities for refugees and where appropriate Ugandans.

16.-18. [Efficient logistics related objectives] (Oxfam UK&I, 1996b).[18]

Objectives Formulated After the Review

The Ikafe/Imvepi settlements, managed by Oxfam since November 1994, currently accommodate 55,000 Sudanese refugees: a further 15,000 are expected in 1997. The main aims of the project are to secure refugees' basic needs, to promote their self-reliance, to promote harmonious relations with the national population and to build Oxfam's policy capacities. (...)

The overall aims and objectives of the programme have been recently revised as laid out below. (...) The programme still demonstrates a commitment towards a development approach to emergencies (new refugees are expected in 1997) and to giving refugees a greater say in the management of activities. The key conclusion of the re-planning process was to work towards more realistic targets that acknowledge:

1. the constraints on land availability and quality and consequent impact on expectations of self-sufficiency;
2. the restrictions caused by continuing insecurity;
3. the need for more deliberate and planned integration with the local community.

The second output of the re-planning process was to endorse the proposed restructuring of the management teams towards a more efficient, streamlined and integrated structure. (...)

The revised main aim and sub-aims are (...) [b] By the end of 1999, to deliver effective and timely services that:

Sub-Aim #1: **Secure basic needs including food security:**	1. lobbying the donor community for adequate input provision; 2. strengthening curative and preventative health services; 3. addressing special and gender needs among the disadvantaged.
Sub-Aim #2: **Promote the self-reliance of 70,000 Sudanese refugees:**	1. promotion of representative and accountable structures; 2. work towards independence from externally provided inputs; 3. reconstruction of community life and cultural expression.
Sub-Aim #3: **Promote harmonious relations between refugees and the national population:**	1. access to refugee services by the local population; 2. recognise and honour cultural practices and land ownership; 3. linkage between refugee and national decision-making structures.
Sub-Aim #4: **Build Oxfam's capacity to implement and influence policy effectively:**	1. institutional learning and lobbying through documentation and M[onitoring] & E[valuation]; 2. availability of adequate infrastructure and logistical support; 3. improving staff performance.

Source: From Oxfam's internal grant administration of activities in the Ikafe project

Endnotes

1 Dawson (1998) refers to Borton and Macrae (1997), who explain that few evaluations of emergency aid actually manage to make estimates of numbers of lives saved.

2 See Appendix with elaborate quotations from documents from before and after the review that spell out the objectives of the project. As will be highlighted in the paper, different stakeholders interpreted the notion of, for example, 'self-sufficiency' quite differently. Oxfam's interpretation was to achieve food self-sufficiency and also improve the sustainability of livelihoods, for example through environmental protection with the project's forestry component and 'through facilitating traditional cultural expression'. UNHCR and WFP wanted food self-sufficiency, and possibly also economic self-sufficiency in order to reduce dependency on the international community's food hand outs.

3 See Roche (1999); and Dawson (1998) who writes 'impact in relation to emergency aid is generally seen as being both about saving lives in the immediate term, i.e. significant change, and also about achieving long-term developmental change'. See Scoones (1998) and Carney (1998) for more on 'sustainable livelihoods', i.e. on what can be considered fundamental or significant change in livelihoods.

4 See Chapter 5 in Roche (1999) who gives a characterisation of emergency evaluations, from Borton and Macrae (1998). As per that classification the Ikafe review was a 'single project study' with an 'emphasis on lesson learning'. However, towards the end of the review pressures were building up to use the outcome of the review also for 'accountability', even though that was not spelled out in the review's Terms of Reference. Hallam (1998) also makes a distinction between the two key goals of evaluation, accountability and lesson learning.

5 See Payne (1998) (e.g. p29–37 and p47–49) for more on the political complications and violence that exposed refugees, local people and Oxfam staff alike; see also van der Gaag (1996).

6 The objectives from before the review reflect this sectoral set-up. See Appendix.

7 AAIN changed its name to AAH, Action Africa Hilfe, but the old name will be used in this paper.

8 'Gazetting' is a process whereby the parliament has to allow land to be registered under a private name or a specific department, as an exception to normal land registration and control. See also Neefjes & David (1996).

9 See Neefjes & David (1996) p30; Payne (1998) p23.

10 From Neefjes & David (1996).

11 Harrell-Bond (1994).

12 Appendix II in Neefjes & David (1996) gives a short summary of what is presented in Sections 2 and 3 of this paper.

13 Before the start of the review most team members had participated in a special PRA training too; see Osuga et al (1996). For more on PRA tools, process and behaviour aspects of the approach see, for example, Chambers (1997).

14 For more on 'trustworthiness' in applied and participatory research, see Pretty (1994) and Roche (1999); on trustworthiness and various methodologies of research see Thomas *et al* (1998).

15 See Hallam (1998) who sums up evaluation criteria under the following headings: (a) efficiency, (b) effectiveness, (c) impact, (d) relevance, (e) sustainability, (f) connectedness, (g) coverage, (h) coherence, and also (i) timeliness, (j) appropriateness and (k) coordination. These generic criteria overlap to some extent with the main constraints identified by the review, in particular with criteria, b, c, e, f, h and k: (1) insecurity, (2) insufficient food/water to meet basic needs, (3) problems related to land, (4) a lack of diversity of livelihoods, (5) issues concerned with communication, representation, participation and integration. Evaluations that are non-participatory, done by experts and with a focus on accountability, could make direct use of agreed minimum standards such as those that are currently being developed by a joint effort of relief agencies known as the SPHERE Project (see also ibid.). That was not done in the Ikafe review, as it would not necessarily go well with the idea that stakeholders themselves define their goals, problems and ideas of impact. However, there might have been a case for communicating them to the various stakeholders at the beginning of the process, because it is conceivable that minimum standards become points of reference for all stakeholders and they could form a kind of shortcut to agreement.

16 Objectives were agreed at the outset of the programme between Oxfam, UNHCR and the MoLG, that is refugees and the host population were not really involved; objectives like self-sufficiency remained hugely controversial in their practical meaning, for example in terms of size of land allocated to refugees. See Appendix for details of the programme objectives before and after the review (as defined by Oxfam).

17 As witnessed by project documentation quoted in the Appendix.

18 This reference contains similar specific objectives to Oxfam(UK&I) (1996a), but they are slightly reworded, and there are more objectives.

Glossary of Terms

Blocks: Groups of about 24 households in the refugee settlement; three to four blocks make up a 'village' and on average five villages made up a 'point'.

ha: Hectare.

Local councils: LC1 is the lowest level of democratically elected local government in Uganda, LC5 is the highest level of local government, at the district level. See Figure 2.

Point Committee: Elected refugees at 'point' level (see 'zone' and 'block').

Zone Committee: Elected refugees at 'zone' level. The Ikafe/Imvepi settlement was made up of five 'zones', each comprising an average of nine 'points'.

Abbreviations

AAIN	Action Africa In Need (now: Action Africa Hilfe)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire)
EU	European Union
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoU	Government of Uganda
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
LC	Local Council
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front (one of Uganda's rebel forces operating in the west and northwest of the country, allegedly with bases in Sudan and the DR Congo, formerly Zaire).

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RRN

Background

The Relief and Rehabilitation Network was conceived in 1993 and launched in 1994 as a mechanism for professional information exchange in the expanding field of humanitarian aid. The need for such a mechanism was identified in the course of research undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) on the changing role of NGOs in relief and rehabilitation operations, and was developed in consultation with other Networks operated within ODI. Since April 1994 the RRN has produced publications in three different formats, in French and English: Good Practice Reviews, Network Papers and Newsletters. The RRN is now in its second three-year phase (1996–1999), supported by four new donors: DANIDA, SIDA (Sweden), the Department of Foreign Affairs (Ireland), and the Department for International Development (UK). Over the three year phase the RRN will seek to expand its reach and relevance amongst humanitarian agency personnel, and to further promote good practice.

Objective

To improve aid policy and practice as it is applied in complex political emergencies.

Purpose

To contribute to individual and institutional learning by encouraging the exchange and dissemination of information relevant to the professional development of those engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Activities

To commission, publish and disseminate analysis and reflection on issues of good practice in policy and programming in humanitarian operations, primarily in the form of written publications, in both French and English.

Target audience

Individuals and organisations actively engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance at national and international, field-based and head office level in the 'North' and 'South'.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DANIDA

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